

are heard. There is no more, 'Can we be heard?' It is now. People hear us. They ask, 'What's next?'"

These young people are rightfully going to keep up their demands until we make significant reforms that make a lasting impact. I ask my Republican colleagues to not only listen to these students, but to also take meaningful action to address the gun violence epidemic in this country. Words are not enough. We must move forward.

THE DO-NOTHING REPUBLICAN CONGRESS IS MISSING IN ACTION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. JEFFRIES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. JEFFRIES. Mr. Speaker, exactly 1 month ago, 14 innocent students and 3 innocent teachers were massacred at a high school in Parkland, Florida.

We are in the midst of a gun violence epidemic in this country; mass shooting after mass shooting after mass shooting; massacre in the workplace in San Bernardino, California; massacre at a nightclub in Orlando, Florida; massacre at a concert in Las Vegas, Nevada; massacre in churches down in Charleston, South Carolina and in Texas; massacre in schools, in Newtown, Connecticut, and Parkland, Florida.

We are in the midst of a gun violence epidemic in this country, yet the do-nothing Republican Congress is missing in action.

The overwhelming majority of the American people support universal background checks. The overwhelming majority of the American people support limiting access to weapons of war. The overwhelming majority of the American people support raising the age of purchase from 18 to 21. Yet the do-nothing Republican Congress is missing in action.

Our students should be able to go to school and focus on reading, writing, and arithmetic; but, instead, they are often in school with their hands in the air, participating in active shooting drills. Yet the do-nothing Republican Congress is missing in action.

All throughout the country today, tens of thousands of students in blue States and red States; students in urban America, rural America, and suburban America; students in the North, the South, the East, and the West, are walking out of class for 17 minutes to demand that Congress pass commonsense gun violence prevention legislation.

I salute your courage. I salute your conviction. I salute your determination to make a difference.

The students of this great country have stepped up. Now it is time for Congress to do the same. It is time for Congress to choose. We can either stand with the students, or you can stand with the NRA. History will judge us all.

The students of this country are being cut down in the classroom in cold

blood, yet the do-nothing Republican Congress is missing in action.

We don't work for the NRA. We don't work for the gun manufacturers. We don't work for the merchants of death. We work for the American people, and it is time for us to finally address the gun violence epidemic in America.

Enough is enough. The American people deserve a better deal.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. All Members are reminded to direct their remarks to the Chair and not to a perceived viewing audience.

WE NEED RESPONSIBLE GUN SAFETY LAWS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Florida (Mrs. DEMINGS) for 5 minutes.

Mrs. DEMINGS. Mr. Speaker, 1 month ago today, a man brutally murdered 17 children and educators in Parkland, Florida. He killed these innocent people using a semiautomatic, assault-style weapon. These weapons, designed for the battlefield, are easily available across this country.

It has been 19 years since the Columbine school shooting. That massacre shocked America. Our country debated that shooting and the causes for months, for years. But in what has become an all-too-familiar pattern, Congress did nothing to address the factor that makes these massacres so deadly, the easy access to guns.

You see, after Columbine, the gun lobby knew that they were in trouble, so they put a whole lot of time and a whole lot of money into confusing the issue. They said: "It's not guns. It's bullying. It's not guns. It's the lack of school security. It's not guns. It's our violent culture, music, and video games."

Well, other countries have all of these things, but other countries do not have mass shootings like ours because other countries have responsible gun safety laws.

Today, 1 month after the Parkland shooting, we are, once again, discussing guns. Today, as after Columbine, the gun lobby knows that they are in trouble because this time these children who survived the Parkland shooting are not trying to return to the way life was before the shooting. They are taking a stand. And, yes, we do stand with them.

See, these children believe that they can change the world. They should, and they are. I mean, after all, isn't that what we taught them: that when they see something wrong, they do something about it?

So the gun lobby is going back to their same old tactics: It is not guns; it is the fact that the teachers don't have guns.

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How surprising that the gun lobby solution to school shootings is to buy more guns. But as a former law enforcement officer who has been trained

in active shooter situations, I can tell you that arming teachers is a dangerous and disturbing idea. We should prevent mass shootings and not complicate them.

I can tell you that having multiple armed individuals present in an active shooter situation only complicates the response. Arming teachers would lead to taxpayer-sponsored shootouts, endangering outscaled and outgunned teachers, putting our children at risk.

We already ask our overworked and underpaid teachers to do too much. A national survey of teachers found that, if offered the choice to carry a firearm, most would refuse. Many have said they would quit.

The solution to gun violence is not shootouts between teachers and school shooters. Instead, we can finally take serious but real measures addressing gun safety.

We should stop this absurd idea before it becomes reality. Congress should move swiftly to prevent the administration from shifting tax dollars meant for antiterrorism programs to buying guns for teachers. I had hoped to incorporate this commonsense idea in a bill scheduled to come before the Homeland Security Committee last week, but I was blocked for doing so, and that is why, last night, I introduced a new bill to put the idea into law. Money for fighting terrorism should stay where it is, and our teachers should be allowed to teach.

We saw that in my own congressional district in Orlando, Florida, the result of lack of action where 49 people were killed and 58 still suffer life-changing injuries when they were gunned down in a nightclub. See, everybody, living in a country that we say is the greatest country in the world should have the right to go to church, to go to school, to go to a mall, to go to a movie theater without being gunned down.

Mr. Speaker, we should take action after this shooting and do our jobs to protect our children and serve our communities.

TAKING A HARD LOOK AT GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. MEEKS) for 5 minutes.

Mr. MEEKS. Mr. Speaker, I rise this morning because the camera of history is rolling. It is rolling and it is recording. It is recording the fact that the NRA continues to distort the meaning of the Second Amendment, that the NRA continues to incite its members with propaganda and then threatens my Republican colleagues, and that my Republican colleagues, in fear, hover down to their wishes and do nothing to prevent mass shootings in the United States of America.

The camera of history is rolling, Mr. Speaker, and the camera will record the fact that we have a President of the United States who believes in reality TV shows. In fact, he had an open

press reality show-type meeting where he made big promises of improving gun safety. The President declared, in that meeting, that Republican lawmakers are so scared of the NRA. He said that and admitted that the Republican lawmakers are scared of the NRA, but he said that he was not.

Then, just a short time thereafter, what did he do? He didn't have an open show meeting with the NRA. He didn't want the American public to see how he hovered down and gave in to the wishes of the NRA. It wasn't an open press meeting.

If he was so strongly against the NRA or could stand up to them, he should have had a meeting in the Oval Office and had the same press coverage so that we could hear what he was saying to them and they were saying to him. But all we know is what the results were.

The results were that, after he had this behind closed doors meeting with NRA, he didn't come out so strong anymore. He started to back down. He started to say—well, he was so strong about, hey, it didn't make sense about 18 to buy a gun, 18 to 21. That was not in his plans anymore. We saw that he had changed his whole demeanor. Something took place.

We say, Mr. President, if you are not afraid of the NRA, then you do an open meeting with the NRA with the same press as you have done with Members of Congress.

This is the 30th day since we have had that terrible shooting in Florida, and we have got young people now outside who are saying enough is enough. Some think young people don't have an effect on American history and the camera. Well, I dare say to you, I can recall a young person who was only about 17 years old who stood bravely and took beatings to say he wanted America to go in a different direction. That young man is now a Member of Congress and someone whom we admire. He goes by the name of JOHN LEWIS. He was only 16, 17 years old, and it changed America.

And I dare say, there are some 16- and 17-year-olds who are outside today who will change America and make it a better place, and we need to join them. We have got to stop the kinds of letters that I have been receiving in my office.

I have been receiving letters from individuals from the Jack and Jill Association, a large association of young people who want a better America, one named Jeremy Chavez, who said: "My mother has been forced to discuss with me my fear of safety while at school in light of the mass murder of children our age in a place that should be a safe haven for our education."

This is a conversation that neither Jeremy's mother nor any mother should need to have. Yet, with 7,000 innocent children killed since Sandy Hook in 2012, it is one that parents across America are forced to have with their children.

Parents have to instruct their kids to hide under the desk as I did as a child

when I was afraid or we were afraid of a nuclear weapon when we were in the arms war. We used to have to have shelter drills. Here we are, in 2018, and our children have to have shelter drills because of Americans and others who can come in with an assault rifle and take lives in a matter of seconds.

No, that is not the United States we want. That is not the United States that these young people want to live in, and they will stand and fight and change the course of America.

DEMANDING VOICES BE HEARD ON GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. LEVIN) for 5 minutes.

Mr. LEVIN. Mr. Speaker, students from across the Nation, including from my Ninth District in Michigan, are demanding that their voices be heard on the issue of gun violence. They are upset with the carnage they have witnessed. They are fearful for their safety, and they are tired of excuses and inaction.

But 1 month after the tragedy in Parkland, Florida, not to mention so many prior school shootings, Republican leaders in Congress have failed to bring up any legislation that might meaningfully control the weapons that are being used to kill and wound so many Americans. So all of us Democrats are coming here today, many of us. On the Republican side—I am not sure the screen can show—we see empty seats. No bill on assault weapons, no bill on improving background checks, no bill to ban bump stocks, nothing—this is a terrible moment of silence when we desperately need a moment of action.

While there is no single answer to gun violence, any credible response must address the weapons of war that are turning our schools, houses of worship, movie theaters, and concerts into battlefields. Assault weapons with magazines holding 30 bullets are not needed by hunters nor are they required for self-defense. They are killing machines, and increasing numbers of our fellow Americans have become their victims.

Congress must stand up to the NRA and say, "Enough." Even President Trump called out Republican Members of Congress for being too afraid of the NRA to act, saying the NRA has "great power over you people; they have less power over me."

But ever since, President Trump has been backtracking, showing he, too, is more scared of the NRA's political muscle than he is of the public's demand for change. This outcome is depressingly familiar.

Fifty years ago, 1 week after Bobby Kennedy was assassinated, I spoke on the issue of gun violence at Wayne State University. I felt compelled to speak about the myths that the NRA was spreading regarding any effort toward sensible gun control. In my 1968

speech, I said: "One of the favorite sayings of the NRA and the rest of the gun lobby is that 'guns don't kill people; people kill people.' The figures show the inaccuracy of the statement. The truth is that 'people with guns kill people.'"

This remains as true today as it was 50 years ago, and yet we still remain paralyzed by the NRA. And what is its solution to gun violence? More guns. More guns in the classroom by arming teachers, more guns on the streets through lax concealed carry laws, and more guns crossing State lines by overriding local laws. In this deranged math, more guns somehow equals less violence.

Grieving parents and terrified students deserve so much better. They are tired of the stonewalling, the diversion, and the deception. They are demanding real action to stop gun violence. Let us act now.

THOUSANDS GATHER TO PROTEST GUN VIOLENCE

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. HARPER). The Chair recognizes the gentleman from New York (Mr. NADLER) for 5 minutes.

Mr. NADLER. Mr. Speaker, as we speak, thousands of young people from across the country are gathered outside to protest gun violence and to ask, to beseech, to demand that we take action.

Mr. Speaker, we know what to do. We know that we ought to amend the law to provide effective background checks before people can purchase guns—not just background checks when you purchase from a licensed dealer, but background checks when you purchase a gun anywhere.

We know that we ought to eliminate the 3-day limits so that, if they don't finish the background check within 3 days, you can't get your gun.

We know that we should renew the assault weapons ban that was in effect from 1994 to 2004 so you can't buy military killing machines in this country for civilian use.

We know we ought to ban the high-capacity magazines that can convert guns into killing machines for large numbers of people that have no other purpose. You don't hunt a deer with a high-capacity magazine.

We know we ought to ban bump stocks, and we know the other things we ought to do.

But we are, too many of us, cowards. We quell before the National Rifle Association.

We know the fact is that it is guns in the hands of people that kill people. Compared to every other country in the world, every other industrial country in the world, we stand out like a sore thumb.

If you look at other statistics, this country—Great Britain, 75 people killed by guns in a year; another country, 142. No country is in more than three digits except the United States at 33,000.